

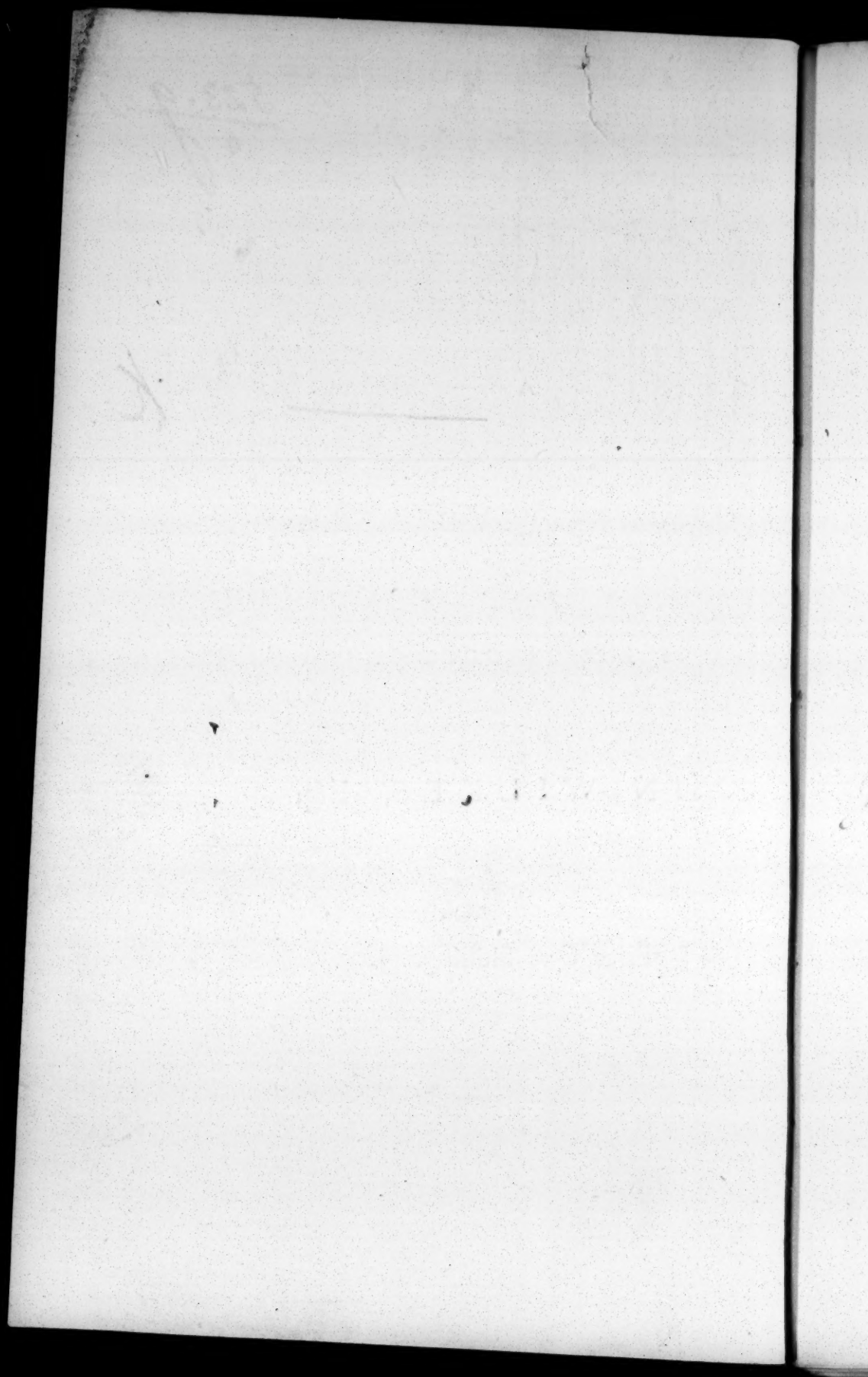
A

COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE CONDUCT OF

JOHN WILKES, Esq;

[Price One Shilling.]



523.921
4

A

COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE CONDUCT OF

JOHN WILKES, Esq;

AS CONTRASTED WITH

THE OPPOSITE MEASURES

DURING

THE LAST SIX YEARS.

BY

12924

John **** R. De C. lington

When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am — nothing extenuate —
Nor set down aught in malice.

OTHELLO.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, No. 38, Fleet-
Street. 1768.

THIS pamphlet is entered at the
Stationers Hall ---- whoever re-
prints it will be prosecuted.

A

COMPARATIVE VIEW, &c.

I Remember, at different times, to have seen partial discussions, of almost every circumstance, throughout the conduct of Mr. Wilkes --- the celebrated CHAMPION of LIBERTY and VICTIM of ministerial persecution --- Or, according to some, the insolent LIBELLER of his KING ---- and Disturber of national tranquility.

These Dissertations have as frequently been accompanied with others, supporting the propriety of conduct in the mea-

B

sures

tures taken against him --- or arraigning these measures, as arbitrary and oppressive.

But I know not that any one has offered such a collective view of the transactions on both sides, as may afford us an opportunity of forming a settled and uniform opinion of the merits of this Person, or convince us of the justness or impropriety of so rigorous a prosecution, pursued at the expence of the peace and quiet of the community (I was almost tempted to say, the safety of the constitution) together with the blood and lives of several individuals.

It is in my desire, therefore, to present such a general prospect, as may answer these purposes; and this shall be attempted --- not from transcribing the productions of professed partizans of either side
--- but

--- but from such an impartial arrangement of facts, as seem granted on all hands.

It was during the course of the year sixty-two, that the name of Mr. Wilkes first engaged the public attention, he being the supposed author, or at least assistant-composer, of that well known periodical paper, the NORTH BRITON---a work professedly carried on for the detection and correction of ministerial abuses, and which, being the instrument employed in cleansing the AUGEAN STABLE of politics, could not but disturb and incense the DROVES of vermin that had so long and securely nestled and fat'ned amongst the filth --- These at length, unable longer to bear up against the disturbance, rush, with united force, upon their supposed Antagonist, whilst the whole band of Ostlers and Runners fail not to pursue

him, at the same time, with every species of lawless weapons, under pretence that he designed to insult and mal-treat their LORD and MASTER.

This account, though allegorical, will be found pretty close to the truth.

The severest enemies of Mr. Wilkes, granting them that he was the author of any one, or all of those papers (which was yet never proved) can draw from thence no conclusion essentially different from the above --- For tho' the author of them (whoever he was) has shewn no mercy to either Principals or Abettors of unconstitutional measures --- has laid open every deed of darkness he could obtain a knowledge of --- detected and exposed every enemy of his country, by what names or titles dignified or distinguished, slaying them from Dan even to Beersheba ---
yet

yet has he evinced, thro' the whole of the work, that nothing was more firmly in his intention, than to avoid every imputation, unmerited as it must have been, upon the amiable character of his Sovereign: --- Nay, they who mean to see only THINGS VISIBLE, confess, that no production at, or since that time, has contained more impartial and genuine panegyric, or more dutiful professions of allegiance to the best of Kings.

Sorry I am, being of this opinion also, that I cannot point out any other source of his succeeding sufferings and persecutions, than what arose from the probability, that he composed these celebrated pages --- Upon these only grounds are founded a long succession of inflictions of different kinds, which, if they are not more than adequate to the degree of his offences, I fear we must be put upon devising

vising new modes of punishment for crimes of a darker hue, unless we would rather distribute partial justice.

Candour, or at least the want of a better acquaintance with the movements of the STATE MACHINE, obliges me to impute to the same cause, that unconstitutional exertion of ministerial power, by which his PERSON, privileged and protected in as sacred a manner as those of his adversaries, was seized by virtue of a GENERAL WARRANT, particularizing neither facts nor persons --- his HOUSE plundered --- the private recesses of his papers ransacked for materials of detection --- and, to compleat the scene, himself conveyed a close prisoner to the Tower --- whence he was not released, but by a verdict of the court of Common Pleas, declaring the whole proceedings illegal and anti-constitutional,

constitutional, to the eternal honour of the truly patriotic PRESIDENT.

An unexpected end, being, by these means, put to the designs of his Opponents, new stratagems are employed --- and every private engine set at work to find out fresh matter against him, of what kind soever it might be, as appears by the sequel.

For, after a vain and fruitless search for causes of complaint --- these (now on a sudden) heavenly minded zealots, having given him of their temporal things, are about to partake with him in his spiritual ones --- A religious and conscientious charge is trumped up, and fixed upon --- and in support of it --- a smutty POEM, which for seven, and seven long years, had slept in his escrutore, is brought forth to confront him --- He is
charged

charged with being the Father of this GRACELESS BABE --- which, yet, with better reason, is generally believed more nearly related --- even to a LORD PRIMATE of England than to Mr. Wilkes. This ill-complexioned child he is said to have ushered into the world, to the offence of all good and pious men, women, and children. Nay, there were not found wanting twelve good men and true, who, particularly, from an unfortunate cast they observed in its eyes, made bold to pronounce it of his breeding and education --- and fairly to saddle him with every consequence attending such a species of bastardy --- Indeed, it is generally confessed, that the MONSTER had this in common, with many other features of distortion, not existing in its reputed father --- In this case, nevertheless, it were to be hoped, that an INQUEST, charitably disposed, would have argued, rather from
the

the general dissimilitude, than the particular and accidental resemblance.

It is presumed, the reader well enough conceives that it is meant, he should understand, that in consequence of a trial, Mr. Wilkes was found guilty of publishing, if not writing, a certain INEFFABLY, IMPURE and OBSCENE poem, as the Rev. Dr. Kidgel most feelingly intituled it — which poem, nevertheless, was not published after all by him, or his consent — as partiality itself must be brought to confess with him — if a precise meaning can be affixed to any word in our language — and further — that it never would have been published, had not his opponents taken that task to themselves.

We are now arrived at a period, which having seen him under the cognizance of the LAW, leaves him open to its resent-

C

ment

ment. — But THIS, however, was not, for certain reasons, to take place at present : --- The delinquent was not ripe for execution ; at least, he was conceived out of the reach of its WHIP and LONG CLAWS. --- His name was still to be found written in the book of the *patr. conscript.* and until it were thoroughly thence obliterated, he would be found an improper object to fill a certain POST of elevation --- it is necessary that he be debased, ere he become thus exalted --- as some men rise to fall, --- others, *vice versa*, must fall to rise. ----- And now ye ministring spirits of all powerful MINISTERS, be not wanting to assist them --- aid them in dreams by night, and in visions by day, to humble HIM, who so sorely hath humbled them --- Shew to them upon their pillows, this never-ceasing goad of their side, now trampled under their feet --- Paint him out stripped of his honours and
his

his purple robe --- licking the very dust
of shame and sorrow --- debased beneath
the lowest of the people --- no --- exalted
ten feet above the tallest of them.

And that ye may effectually compass
this for your masters --- take a trip some-
times into other chambers than theirs ---
attend the slumbers of the proud PATRI-
CIAN --- of the ambitious, amongst the
ELECT of the PLEBEIANS ---- Impress on
their MENTAL, VISUAL NERVE, the images
of broad filken fringes of blue and red,
wherewith to gird them --- Shew them
FORMS, as of stars, wrought about of
divers colours --- of divers colours of
needlework.

The charm was potent --- it has taken
already --- See how they BOW before the
golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the
**** had set up --- Follow them hence ---

attend the councils of this venal herd ---
 See, they eject from amongst them the
 MAN, who had upheld the pillars of the
 community --- who despised the menaces
 of the mighty --- and having suffered in
 his own person, had provided against the
 like sufferings of others in future ages ---
 He who maintained the cause of liberty
 --- the cause of all --- is driven from his
 strong hold, into the merciless clutches of
 those who would eat him up ----- Here,
 ye glorious FEW, who were not consent-
 ing to this deed of infamy --- let me
 apostrophize you --- Be your names tranf-
 mitted down on plates of brass, and in
 letters of gold, to latest posterity ! -----
 May they adorn the walls and portals of
 that HOUSE, in which ye so nobly sup-
 ported the cause of independance.

And now, men of Aylesbury, send him
 back again ---- alas ! we were not solli-
 cited

cited --- Was there no one to put it in your heads?--- Alas! alas! the excrescence on our shoulders was not come to a HEAD ---- and thus the inattention of friends, working in concert with the machinations of professed enemies, compleats the projected plan.

We see him, at this crisis, the naked butt of tyranny, inviting the darts and arrows of cowardly insolence; which are ever found dipped in deadly poison, for the purposes of effectual execution.

Now, from each lurking corner, the GALLED KIBE is lifted up to assail him --- while the strong hand of JUSTICE, sleeping till now, is seen in concert to shake its whip of wires --- And dost thou, semblance of divine essence, meanly join the coward band? --- Then, friend of LIBERTY, get thee hence --- thy safety lies
in

in flight --- Leave an ungrateful land, unworthy thy anxious thought--- and see--- across yon channel --- the land of slaves --- in admiration of virtues she dares not practice --- with open arms ready to receive thee.

Lawless necessity recommends the step --- he hastens to the hospitable shore --- expecting the favourable moment, when time or chance shall carve him out a way to the summit of honour and fortune.---In this situation we find him ever and anon attempting to regain the port whence the storm had driven him--- and as constantly repuls'd, so soon as he sets foot upon the Land of Promise--- whither (as was given out) his old friends, some of them again in power, had invited him, or allured by the prospect of a veil of oblivion to be cast over his real or supposed offences --- But disappointed still, he as often returns
in

to his old residence, in the land of DESPOTISM --- unfit nursery for the seeds of liberty and independence.

Still this was not ever to be the case--- he arrives at length in good earnest; and by a resolution, which must excite surprise and admiration, we see him at the dissolution of the last parliament --- tho' in a state of outlawry --- unhouselled --- unanknelled --- stand forth a candidate to represent the metropolis of England --- but unsuccessful in his aim.

From what circumstances this happened I cannot take upon me to determine --- Some folks, and perhaps not altogether rashly, are bold to impute his miscarriage to other causes than a defection in the HEARTS of his electors --- asserting that a pre-engagement alone deprived him of the services of many --- whilst an absolute

lute state of dependance and servility withheld a greater number from gratifying the desires of their hearts.

Indeed this supposition seems in some measure confirmed by the acknowledged majority in his favour on the day of election --- the body of voters at that time appearing collectively --- But when each hand was to be held up and seen apart --- then it was that these motives were seen to operate, or (according to some) to outweigh the inclinations of those who held them up.

It may not, perhaps, be too forced a supposition, to believe that Mr. Wilkes himself considered this matter in no other light; when, finding himself unsuccessful, he made an immediate tender of the same services to the county of Middlesex
--- Small

--- Small and inconsiderable when taken exclusively from the metropolis.

Whether this was, or was not the case, the event of the other justified the propriety of the argument --- we find him, on the day of election, returned by a considerable majority of Freeholders.

But no sooner did this piece of good fortune befall him, in recompence of his sufferings --- to say nothing of his merits --- than a detached party from the old quarter is instantly under arms, and in motion to attack him.

Whilst he continued defenceless ---- and like the poor worm, without other power than to turn harmless against the foot that crushes it --- he is left in peace and quietness.

D

But

But no sooner does he bestir himself--- no sooner does this political HYDRA reinforce itself--- than the Herculean club is levelled at it.

We saw Mr. Wilkes in public --- in the FORUM --- we even saw him undisturbed in his endeavours to re-establish himself in his former legislative seat --- It may be, this was permitted from a secure confidence in his weakness, and the supposed impracticability of his attaining it --- Perhaps it might be done, not without a settled design of casting him from the summit --- should he gain it --- with greater precipitation, and more exemplary destruction.

All this we saw --- and were left to comment upon it as I have done --- or in what other manner we thought proper.

But

But at length comes an event which expells the mist from our eyes.

The same person, who but a few days before was left --- in common with his fellow-creatures --- to the mercies of the winds and weather --- is now become too consequential to be trusted abroad.

This resolution (how long determined on is not to the purpose) was first put in execution on a DAY that our HERO had solemnly PLIGHTED HIS HONOUR to the public, for his attendance upon the supreme court of justice, awaiting whatever penal inflictions he had incurred from the nature of his supposed offence.

But it seems he was more ready to make *les amendes honorable*, than his judges to attend the ceremony.

D 2

That

That court had determined upon a different process --- aiming rather like Fabius of Rome --- *CUNCTANDO rem publicam restituere.*

Perhaps a parity of circumstances had determined them to adopt, for once, a PRECEDENT from the Roman Forum --- But here an observation intrudes itself upon me which I cannot leave behind --- tho' I shall evidently be talking to wiser folks than myself----- it is, that I have ever considered the conduct of Fabius rather as an exception, opposed to a general rule --- than as an imitable precept.

In consequence, however, of this protractive plan, we are never a whit nearer becoming acquainted with the fate of our HERO.

Notwithstanding, his immediate purpose was to expiate his offence by submitting

ting to the sentence of the law --- he is denied his request --- and suffered for the PRESENT to depart in peace---But---(succets to the glorious UNCERTAINTY of the LAW)--- apprehended the very same evening, in order to be imprisoned, till it shall be thought reasonable to indulge him in his PETITION.

I shall not venture upon a single observation further --- nay, I shall studiously avoid a display of my PROPHETIC talents --- lest the event should give the lie to my predictions --- and my inanity should be ridiculed --- and the courteous reader will be pleased to bear me witness--- that I drop my tale and my HERO together --- at the instant --- nay, before the prison door is opened to receive him --- and what may seem unkind to persons of sensibility --- now that it has closed upon him (as the way of the world is in like circumstances,

stances, tho' once my neighbour and my friend) I shall e'en leave him to peep thro' his GRATE by himself---perhaps not from the same motives --- and that I may indulge thy curiosity, and not give thee a worse opinion of me at parting, than thou hast already conceived, gentle reader, I will tell thee why this comes to pass --- that I may avoid being numbered with an unthinking multitude, who know not wherefore they are assembled --- or what they are about to do --- that I may not be rank'd with those of little knowledge --- or haply be found amongst the disobedient and rebellious children.

The

The POSTSCRIPT -----

MAY perchance afford the reader a small matter of surprize, tho' it be calculated but to remind him of a circumstance, to be observed in his journey through these pages --- which, however, it is more than probable, has entirely escaped him --- Pardon me, kind reader, that I have sung thee a song without its burthen --- and been telling thee a story without head or tail --- Dost thou not perceive, that in exhibiting a detail of the conduct and sufferings of John Wilkes, Esq; --- I have purposedly avoided pointing out any first or immediate CAUSE --- That I have not taken a single Scottish man by the nose --- or arraigned lord Bute as the author of them --- it may be he was --- and it may be, after all, he
was

was not --- at least, as either of these positions contains more than I can assert from knowledge --- I shall leave it to each of my readers to fix the *primum mobile*, or *causa sine qua non*, exactly at what point he pleases --- firmly believing he will be better satisfied with a conclusion of his own, than any I shall draw for him.

If he should complain, that by this conduct I shall not have done what is expected of a writer --- I beg leave to reply, that nothing further should be required of any one, than it is given him to know ---- and that I have, before this time, purchased as imperfect a production as he has now perused, at the same price of ONE SHILLING.

POST-

P O S T - P O S T S C R I P T .

BE it known to the reader --- that till after these papers had found their way to the press --- it was intended the concluding word of the last period should divide the thread of our CORRESPONDENCE for the present.

But recollecting that this word might unfortunately recall to his memory--- the only circumstance I would wish him to forget --- *videlicet* --- the price at which he purchased the acquaintance---I thought it more politic, even to risque a QUARREL with him --- and in that case --- to conclude my pamphlet, by serving him with a CHALLENGE --- and a challenge has, before now, been introduced with success at the catastrophe of other connections

E

nections --- when nothing farther was meant to ensue --- and I know, moreover, that it is no new step to insult one's friends when our private END is answered.

Therefore if any of you, SIRS, should presume to gainsay any position or negation --- or subvert any syllogism or hypothesis contained in these pages ---- I pronounce him a false TRAITOR --- to common ACCEPTATION --- general CONSENT --- and universal BELIEF ---- and do challenge him --- in the name of my HERO --- in my own title-page name (for should he know my family-one, the odds but one or other of us decline the engagement) or in the name of any reasonable man --- TO MAINTAIN the SAME ----- at fair and lawful argumentative weapons---(*Argumento bacculino nihilominus excepto*

excepto)---at what time and place he shall think proper.

As to such of my readers, whose opinions coincide with the sense of these sheets --- I desire to take leave --- in the stile of majesty --- HEARTILY BIDDIN THEM FAREWELL.

F I N I S.

